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J. GURNEY'S

A P P E A L

TO THE

P U B L I C.

*He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour
cometh and searcheth him. PROV. xviii. 7.*

SOON after the melancholy news of Mr. Whitefield's death arrived, several of my friends desired me to print some Sermons of his, that I had taken down in shorthand at the time of their delivery. Mr. Keen, in consequence of an application made to him by a friend of mine, desired to see a specimen of the Sermons. I sent to him a transcript of almost the whole of Mr. Whitefield's last farewell Sermon, on John x. 27, 28. which, after keeping near three weeks, he returned with strong expressions of approbation, promising that he would cause them to be
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recommended from the Pulpit, at the Tabernacle and the Chapel, according to the following agreement, which I drew up at the same time at his request:

London, the thirteenth of November, one thousand seven hundred and seventy. It is this day mutually agreed between Robert Keen, woollen-draper, on the one part, and Joseph Gurney, bookseller, on the other part. The said Robert Keen, upon his part, engages and promises to recommend and authenticate to the public, the collection of Sermons preached by the late Rev. Mr. Whitefield, which are now preparing for the press, from the short-hand notes of the said Joseph Gurney; and the said Joseph Gurney, upon his part, hereby promises and engages to allow one shilling profit to the said Robert Keen, upon every copy of the aforesaid Sermons that shall be sold by the means of the said Robert Keen; as well at the Chapel in Tottenham-Court-Road, and the Tabernacle in Moorfields, as in America; the said shilling profit upon every copy so sold, to be clear of all deduction, to be at the disposal of the said Robert Keen, according to the tenor of Mr. Whitefield's will respecting the profits arising from any of his, Mr. Whitefield's works; and it is mutually agreed, that the above-mentioned profit of one shilling, upon each of the volumes sold as above, shall extend to every edition that the said Joseph Gurney may publish of the above-mentioned Sermons. Witness our hands the day and date aforesaid.

Mr. Keen approved of the agreement; he declined signing of it at that time, but desired a copy of it, which I gave him. I immediately drew up the following advertisement:



To the PUBLIC.

There are now preparing for the press, and will be published with all convenient expedition, a genuine collection of Sermons, by the late-reverend Mr. George Whitefield, taken verbatim in short-hand, by J. Gurney, a specimen of which has been laid before

before the Gentlemen who have the management of Mr. Whitefield's affairs, and have met with their approbation.

It is therefore thought necessary to caution the public against being imposed upon by any spurious publication, and especially that already obtruded upon the world, under the title of Mr. Whitefield's Farewel Sermon, of which Mr. Whitefield thus expressed himself in a letter to his friend, dated off New Romney, Sept. 26, 1769. " I wish you had advertised against the publisher of my last Sermon; it is not verbatim as I delivered it. In some places he makes me speak quite nonsense and false concord; in others, the sense and connexion is destroyed by the injudicious disjointed paragraphs; the whole is entirely unfit for the public notice: and there is no occasion to bring one's self into needless contempt."

A genuine copy of that Sermon, as well as several others, preached upon particular occasions, will be printed in this collection, which will be sold only by Joseph Gurney, bookseller in Holborn, opposite Hatton-garden; at the Tabernacle in Moorfields; and at the Chapel in Tottenham-Court-Road.

Mr. Keen took a copy of the above advertisement, which he promised should be read in the Pulpit at the Tabernacle and Chapel. Mr. Keen promised several different times when it should be read, and as often failed, notwithstanding I repeatedly urged the performance of his promise; at last, he said Mr. Decourcy would be the most proper person to read it, and he would therefore defer it till he came to town, which was expected shortly. Mr. Decourcy came to town soon after, but the paper was never read. As soon as I could get a proof of the first half-sheet, I took it to Mr. Keen; he expressed his satisfaction with the exactness of it. I offered him a review of the future proof sheets, which he declined, and said he should be satisfied with Dr. Gifford's revival; and at the same time Mr. Keen said he would send fifteen hundred copies of the Sermons to America.

When the printing of the volume was nearly completed, I sent a copy of the first nine Sermons to each of the Trustees; and calling some days after at Mr. Keen's, I met Mr. Hardy there; then they began, *for the first time*, speaking against the Sermons; they said they were like the ravings of a madman, and utterly unfit for publication. Mr. Hardy indeed offered another reason, why he did not approve of the Sermons; he said, SOME PEOPLE THOUGHT IT VERY STRANGE, THAT ONE BOOKSELLER SHOULD PUBLISH MR. WHITEFIELD'S WORKS, AND ANOTHER BOOKSELLER A VOLUME OF HIS SERMONS. I desired they would point out any passage that was not printed as delivered by Mr. Whitefield, or shew where any thing that was delivered by Mr. Whitefield, had been omitted; both of which they prudently declined, and contented themselves with saying, that the editor should have thrown out every inelegant expression. I told them *I would not consent to have the Sermons garbled*; that I would print them *faithfully* as they were delivered; that if they would point out any mistake, that either the leaf should be cancell'd, or an *erratum* printed. I waited on Mr. West the next morning; Mr. West told me that he had read one of the Sermons, which he heard preached, (I think he said the first) and *was surprised to find it so exact*. Dr. Gifford and Mr. Keen had several meetings after this, but to no purpose. The Sermons were printed off, and the publication had been delayed several weeks, by waiting for Mr. Keen's determination. At last, by Mr. Keen's appointment, Dr. Gifford and myself gave him the meeting at the Chapel Vestry, on Tuesday the first of September.

Mr. Keen then continued to speak dimnitively of the Sermons; but the Rev. Mr. Kinsman, who was present, said that it was his opinion that *the Sermons were printed as delivered by Mr. Whitefield*, but that Mr. Whitefield's discourses, of late years, were very unfit for the press without undergoing a considerable alteration. I begged of Mr. Keen to keep me no longer in suspense, but give me an answer, whether he chose to have any concern in the publication:

lication: he said, he did not chuse to have any concern in it; and as we were going away, he called me back and desired that I would NOT PUBLISH THEM FOR SIX MONTHS; I replied that the Sermons would be as exceptionable six months hence as they were now; that I had already delayed the publication several months to oblige him, and would defer it no longer. On the following Saturday morning, *Mr. Keen, Mr. Hardy, and Mr. West.* came together to my house, and asked me what I intended to do, respecting the Sermons; I told them that I had entered them at Stationers Hall, and sent many into the country; they said they were sorry I had proceeded so far, for that they came to offer me the money the Sermons had cost me, and to take them all off my hands, but were sorry it was too late. I told them that if they had made the offer sooner, I would not have accepted it, and thereby have suppressed a collection of Sermons that bid fair for eminent usefulness. On the day following (Lord's day) Mr. Kinsman, notwithstanding he had declared the preceding Tuesday, that he believed the Sermons *were printed as Mr. Whitefield delivered them*, I say, notwithstanding this, Mr. Kinsman read a paper in the pulpit, at the Tabernacle, acquainting the audience, as I am informed by several that were present, that the Volume of Sermons, about to be published as Mr. Whitefield's by Joseph Gurney, *were not Mr. Whitefield's, either in sentiment or expression*; and advised the people not to buy them, for that if they did, they would be imposed upon. The same notice was also given by the Minister, at the Chapel. As I was not present at either place, when the paper was read, I went on the Tuesday following to Mr. Keen's, and desired a copy of it; Mr. Keen said Mr. Hardy had the original; accordingly, after worship was over that night at the Chapel, I went into the Vestry, and requested a copy of Mr. Hardy. Mr. Hardy told me he had it not about him. *One of Mr. Hardy's friends* abused me in a virulent and vulgar manner, notwithstanding I gave him no kind of provocation; (for the propriety of my behaviour, I appeal to every person that was present.) As soon as I had obtained

obtained Mr. Hardy's answer, which was, that I might see what they had to say about the Sermons on the number of Mr. Whitefield's works, which would be published on the next Saturday but one. I came away not a little rejoiced that Mr. Hardy's friend had dismissed me with *only WISHING*, that he could see THE SERMONS BURNING UPON ONE PILE, AND ME UPON ANOTHER; as I was apprehensive I should have received some personal injury.

On Saturday, September 14, in No. 29, of Mr. Whitefield's Works, the following advertisement appeared:

I wish you had advertized against the publisher of my last Sermon. It is not verbatim as I delivered it. In some places, he makes me to speak false concord, and even nonsense. In others, the sense and connection are destroyed, by the injudicious disjointed paragraphs; and the whole is entirely unfit for the public review. See Mr. Whitefield's works, Vol. III. page 406, 407, Letter MCCCCXL.*

* The very same censures are too justly applicable to the volume of Sermons, now published by Mr. Gurney as Mr. Whitefield's. — Relying on the accuracy of the short-hand-writer, and on the fidelity of the reverend gentleman who was to revise the Sermons, and on their joint regard for the memory of Mr. Whitefield, his executors did agree to recommend the intended publication, and promote its sale; for which, a consideration was to be paid by Mr. Gurney, to be applied by them, according to the tenor of Mr. Whitefield's will; but on their receiving nine of the Sermons, (worked off) to their great surprize, they found themselves, after perusal, unable to authenticate them, either as to language or sentiments; therefore judging them utterly unfit for publication, they told Mr. Gurney, that on no consideration whatever, could they recommend them to the public. The executors are extremely concerned on Mr. Gurney's account, as well as for the character of their late worthy friend; and now wish that they had not rested with the hearing only one half sheet read to them, but had insisted on seeing the whole manuscript, and every sheet from the press. However, though Mr. Gurney ought to have stopped the press when first applied to, and although the agreement was never signed by either of the parties, the executors have repeatedly offered, that, besides cheerfully renouncing all advantages, they will pay whatever expences Mr. Gurney hath been at in the affair, and so take and bear the whole impression; as otherwise the purchasers must be deceived, and the name of the deceased sorely wounded.

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If the reader turns back to the advertisement of the Sermons, that was drawn up at Mr. Keen's, he will find that the letter to which this note is affixed, is there mentioned, and the public are informed in that advertisement, that the Sermon that had been printed was very defective, but that *mine* was genuine; and prior to this, Mr. Keen had compared that Sermon and mine together. Yet now he says, *the very same censures* are applicable to mine. It is totally false to assert that they rested with *bearing only one half sheet read to them*; for, as mentioned before, they had, besides that half sheet, very near the whole of the last Sermon three weeks in their possession; and that they repeatedly offered me my expences, is untrue; for the offer that was made me after the publication, as mentioned before, was the *only* one that ever was made me. Mr. Keen had, indeed, said *once* before, namely, at the meeting before mentioned, at the Chapel, that it was a pity but some method could be hit upon, whereby my expences might be paid me, and the Sermons be destroyed. And I replied at that time, that if he was to offer me the money down that they cost, and I was sure that I should make no more by the publication, yet would I publish them, because I thought they would be made useful; and, to convince the public that I did not mean to obtrude upon them a collection of Sermons as Mr. Whitefield's, which were not authentic, I advertised in the public news-papers, that *if the purchaser, after having read them, should be of opinion that they were not genuine, I would return his money*. And though I have sold upwards of 600 copies, I have not had a single purchaser express the least dissatisfaction; very many, on the contrary, have in the warmest terms expressed their approbation, and among them many of the greatest Divines of the present day. And I do now repeat, that I ENGAGE TO RETURN ANY PURCHASER'S MONEY, WHO SHALL, AFTER HE HAS READ THE SERMONS, BE OF OPINION THAT THEY ARE NOT GENUINE.

N. B.

N. B. If the plural number is mentioned in relation to the Trustees, where, perhaps, Mr. Keen only acted, it was taken for granted, that he acted on the part of the other Trustees.

This appeal may be had, *gratis*, at Joseph Gurney's, Bookfeller, on Holborn-hill.

F. I. N. I. S.

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